DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 099 SP 033 881

AUTHOR Robinson, Rosemary; And Others
TITLE Once a Teacher Always a Teacher? Encouraging Return to Teaching.
INSTITUTION Scottish Council for Research in Education.
SPONS AGENCY Scottish Education Dept., Edinburgh.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-947833-66-8; SCRE-RR-36
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 50p.
AVAILABLE FROM Information Services, Scottish Council for Research in Education, 15 St. John Street, Edinburgh EH8 8JR Scotland, United Kingdom (SCRE Research Report No. 36, 4.50 British pounds).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Career Change; Elementary Secondary Education; *Employer Attitudes; Foreign Countries; Occupational Surveys; *Reentry Workers; *Teacher Employment; *Teacher Employment Benefits; *Teacher Recruitment; Teacher Supply and Demand; *Teaching (Occupation)
IDENTIFIERS *Former Teachers; Scotland

ABSTRACT

One approach to the crisis in the supply of teachers in Britain is to attract back to the profession qualified teachers who have left. To know whether this approach is viable, however, it is important to know about the reasons for leaving teaching and factors affecting return. Therefore, a study was conducted to survey trained teachers not currently in full-time employment, to ask why they had left teaching, whether they were likely to return to the classroom, and what measures would encourage them to do so. The study is reported in this document, which is organized into four sections. The first, "Returning to Teaching," presents key findings and their implications. Section 2, "Why Teachers Leave Teaching," discusses child care and domestic commitments, personal circumstances, disillusionment with school teaching, failure to obtain a permanent position, and career change. The third section, "Barriers to Returning," addresses whether the leavers want to return; what prevents teachers from returning; difficulties in getting an appropriate position whether it be part-time, a job share, full time, or substitute teaching; and worries about the educational system and conditions in schools. The final section, "What Employers Might Do," includes keeping in touch with teachers, informing about vacancies, a reintroduction to teaching, support for returners, managed career breaks, salaries commensurate with experience, and child care. The research design and methods and a profile of the sample are appended. Five tables complete the document. (LL)

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The Scottish Council for Research in Education

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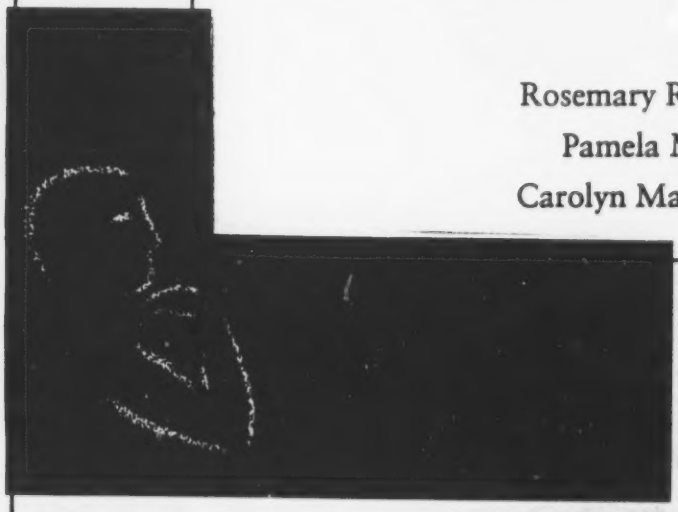
Once a Teacher Always a Teacher?

Encouraging Return to Teaching

Rosemary Robinson
Pamela Munn
Carolyn MacDonald



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Once a Teacher Always a Teacher?

Encouraging Return to Teaching

Rosemary Robinson
Pamela Munn
Carolyn MacDonald

The Scottish Council for Research in Education

SCRE Research Report No 36

First Published March 1992

ISBN 0 947833 66 8

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Report arising from the Returners to Teaching project (reference R/7/1) funded by the Scottish Office Education Department between December 1989 and February 1991.

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Printed and bound by the Scottish Council for Research in Education.

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Acknowledgements

The research would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of many people. The Statistics Division of the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) provided invaluable help in devising and contacting a sample of teachers. The teachers themselves spared time to be interviewed and had clearly given a good deal of thought to questions about factors affecting a return to the profession. The project benefited from the constructive advice of an advisory committee, chaired by Gordon Kirk. The committee commented on drafts of interview schedules and reports and by judicious questioning helped to make these clearer and more precise. Colleagues within SCRE provided help in various ways. Janette Finlay typed successive drafts of text while Rosemary Wake advised on design and lay-out. Catherine Hart was responsible for setting out the final version. Responsibility for the content rests with the authors. The views reported here are not necessarily those of either SCRE or SOED who funded the study.

1 Returning to Teaching

Teacher supply today and tomorrow

A crisis in the supply of teachers is already apparent in a number of areas in Britain and the signs are that this crisis is likely to deepen. One of the main causes of the crisis is the well publicised decline in the number of 20-24 year olds entering the labour market. It is this age group from which new entrants to teaching are most likely to be recruited. However, all sectors of the economy will be trying hard to attract new young talent. Teaching will have to compete with the worlds of finance, business and industry in attracting new graduates. There are indications that current new graduates do not find teaching an attractive prospect. Research in England and Wales has shown that 'teaching is widely regarded by intelligent young people as a last resort' (Smithers *and* Hill, 1989) and there are particular concerns about the level of one year post-graduate applications to teacher training courses (Booth *et al*, 1989).

While the exact nature and extent of shortages has been a matter of debate, what is clear is that shortages are not evenly distributed across school subjects nor the country — London and some parts of the south-east of England seem to be particularly badly hit while other areas, such as the north-west, have relatively few posts unfilled. Scotland appears not to be in immediate crisis, rather the reverse. Figures from the Scottish Office Education Department (1989) suggest a deficit in supply in only two secondary school subjects, religious education and computing, with shortfalls of five and eight teachers respectively. Of course, estimating the true nature and extent of teacher shortage is tricky, not least because, in Scotland, each Region estimates excess and shortage against its own estimated staffing requirement for each school, not against a national standard (SOED, 1989). However, it is generally accepted that projections for stable numbers of pupils in primary and secondary schools, allied to the declining pool of 20-24 year olds, signal the need to increase the number of teachers to be recruited from that declining pool. There have been many responses to the crisis in supply. These include a widespread advertising campaign portraying the attractions of teaching as a career, the introduction in England and Wales of schemes for accredited licensed teachers and the floating of the idea of higher pay for teachers of shortage subjects or in areas of the country with a shortage of teachers.

Attracting back qualified teachers

One approach which has received little attention is to attract back to the profession qualified teachers who have left. Recent estimates suggest that there are almost as many qualified teachers not teaching as teaching (SOED, 1990). To know whether such an approach is viable it is important to know something about reasons for leaving teaching and factors affecting return. This was the focus of this research. We were *not* investigating the

nature and extent of teacher shortages. Our starting point was what might be done to attract back to teaching those who had left.

The research reported here focused on qualified teachers who had left schools or who did not have permanent posts in schools. Their reasons for leaving teaching and their interest in returning are described. The report ends with some suggestions for steps which education authorities could take to encourage return to school teaching. These range from the fairly low-key and inexpensive to the more radical, and are speculative, based on teachers' opinions of what might encourage their return. It was not part of the research remit to explore the feasibility of these suggestions. For example, there is widespread demand for part-time and job-share posts but the report does not contain a breakdown of the likely costs of greater provision of such jobs. Similarly, the provision of childcare facilities or structured career breaks have not been costed.

We are, of course, aware of the financial and other constraints under which local authorities operate but such constraints need not necessarily prevent making more imaginative use of a largely under-used pool of qualified teachers who are interested in returning to the profession. These teachers want to be treated as professionals which typically means that they do not relish supply work, particularly at an hour or two's notice. They want to be valued and provided with accurate information about vacancies as well as a structured re-introduction to teaching. While not underestimating the difficulties which authorities face, we believe that some of the suggestions could be implemented without too much difficulty. The others, which involve more fundamental change, may at least provoke debate and discussion.

Key findings and their implications

Our research followed a survey carried out by the SOED in April 1989 in which a postal questionnaire was sent to around 23,000 non-practising teachers who were registered with the General Teaching Council (GTC), the prerequisite for being able to teach in a state school in Scotland. 12,900 replied. This method of identifying leavers was used by the SOED because it was felt that time and cost constraints would make it impractical to trace all non-practising teachers. From the initial survey, quantitative data on matters such as teachers' reasons for leaving the profession and the likelihood of their return were obtained (SOED, 1990). Our research was designed to follow up in more depth some of the issues raised in the SOED survey. In particular, it sought to answer three questions:

- Why do teachers leave school teaching?
- Are there obstacles to returning once one has left?
- How can local authorities encourage teachers to return?

The answers to these questions were pursued in two ways. First, we conducted semi-structured interviews with a total of 46 non-practising primary and secondary teachers. Second, the content of these interviews provided the basis to develop a tightly structured interview schedule which we used to interview, by telephone, 508 non-practising teachers.

Factors important to interpreting the findings

Sample details and research methods are contained in Appendices A and B (pages 39-43). However, five points are worth stressing here:

- Since the focus of the research was *school* teaching, those who were teaching in other institutions, most notably further education colleges, or who were private tutors were included as potential returners to schools in our sample. There were 30 in this category.
- The sample consisted of those who had kept up their GTC registration. This implies that they had not ruled out going back into school teaching. The findings of this survey, therefore, cannot be generalised to all leavers since those who have let their GTC registration lapse are probably less likely to consider returning to teaching.
- We defined leavers as those not in *permanent* school teaching posts. As a result, our sample included those who were doing supply or temporary teaching. Indeed, a range of issues relating to supply is reported in Chapter 4.
- Where gender or sector differences are reported, these are statistically significant (at the 0.05 level using chi-square).
- The telephone survey sample contained many more women than men. This was because the sample was not stratified by gender; it was stratified by sector (primary/secondary) and by age. This meant that the high proportion of women qualified as primary teachers was reflected in the sample. Random sampling within the secondary sector produced the expected result, reflecting the proportions of men and women within the sampling frame provided by SOED.

It is noteworthy that other studies have indicated that women, particularly those who left teaching to have children, are the most likely group to return. Our findings can be seen as fully exploring women's reasons for leaving teaching and the barriers they face in returning.

It is important to stress that the sample does not allow us to generalise to all non-practising teachers. Rather, it gives pointers to reasons for leaving, barriers to return and practical measures to encourage return. These are summarised below. All figures refer to the 508 teachers who took part in the telephone survey.

Reasons for leaving

		Chapter
Childcare domestic commitments	Almost half the sample had left teaching because of childcare or domestic commitments. No men cited these as reasons for leaving teaching.	2
Personal circumstances	Over one in five teachers left because of changes in personal circumstances. Most commonly these were moves to a different part of the country, illness, or early retirement.	2

		Chapter
Disillusionment with teaching	Almost one teacher in 15 left because they had become disillusioned by the pressures of changes, pupil indiscipline or lack of promotion opportunities.	2
Pay and status	Pay, as such, did not feature among the most important reasons for leaving. However, lack of opportunities for promotion, which was indirectly related to pay issues, was given as a reason for leaving.	2
Failure to obtain a permanent post	One in ten had given up because they had been unable to obtain a permanent job. After trying for jobs for many months, they were forced to seek alternative employment.	2
Career Move	About 9% left because of a positive career move. They were not looking for other jobs because they were disillusioned with teaching, instead opportunities arose which were too good to miss. They entered diverse areas of employment. Men are more likely than women to have obtained new jobs or to have sought additional qualifications.	2

Interest in returning

General interest in returning	Almost three out of four were interested in re-entering the profession. However, those who left for positive reasons of career change were least likely to express an interest in returning.	3
Changed attitudes to returning	After a break from teaching, those who left because they were disillusioned had become more positive about returning.	3
Women	There was a high level of interest in returning among women who had left to have children.	3
Groups not interested in returning	Just over 10% said that they would definitely not return. Only a drastic change in their personal circumstances would lead them to reconsider their decision.	3

Barriers to return

Lack of childcare provision	Unsurprisingly, highlighted by women. There was demand for good quality provision either in or near schools.	3
Lack of part-time/job-share posts	Most women with young families wanted part-time work but had found it very difficult to get.	
Lack of full-time permanent posts	Those who were sole providers, eg single parents, or men whose wives were looking after young children, could not take the risk of temporary or supply work. They preferred secure jobs even if these were lower paid.	3

		Chapter
Unattractiveness of supply	Many teachers found supply work unfulfilling personally and professionally. They complained of being treated as second-class citizens. They were unwilling to do supply.	3
Worries about changes in the school system	General concern about the changing nature of teaching, particularly the amount of paperwork, was mentioned by one in four. Associated with this was lack of confidence in being able to cope with new curriculum provision and assessment methods. Even those who had been out of teaching for just over six months expressed anxiety about being able to cope.	3
Conditions of service	Career structure was frequently cited as a barrier, in particular lack of recognition for non-school experience. There was resentment at having to start again at the bottom.	3

Encouraging return: implications for education authorities

Keeping in touch with teachers who leave	Leavers, even some who have only been away from teaching for a few months, felt out of touch with what was happening in the classroom. Newsletters, meetings and encouraging leavers to teach a couple of days a term, demonstrate the education authority's interest in its former employees, and could help reduce leavers' anxieties.	4
Providing update courses	Reintroduction and refresher courses help to inform returners about curricular changes and to alleviate their anxieties about coping in the classroom. While lectures and theory were generally found to be unwelcome, classroom observation and talking to practising teachers were seen as particularly desirable. Education authorities might consider ways of funding these reintroductory sessions so that returners did not have to pay for them.	4
Opening routine in-service to intending returners	Teachers believed that attendance at appropriate in-service would help keep them abreast of developments. Opening up routine in-service to intending returners would be an economical way of informing them about educational change.	4
Information about vacancies	Returners found the process of finding out about vacancies difficult and frustrating. Clear and regular information about vacancies would help to reduce this. Such information could be sent out with the existing mail-out to teachers on the waiting list and could also be made available through schools and libraries.	4
Part-time and job-share posts	Almost all leavers citing childcare as a barrier to return advocated greater provision of part-time or job-share	4

		Chapter
	employment. Opening up opportunities for this type of work to returners is probably the single most effective thing that Regions could do to encourage women back into teaching.	
Childcare support	Although the majority of women with pre-school children were not considering returning to teaching, for a minority finding childcare facilities was a problem. The provision of creches or nurseries within schools or having lists of registered childminders within easy distance of schools would be a great help to these women.	4
Flexibility for parents	There were other strategies which women with childcare commitments thought would facilitate their return. These included flexible school starting and finishing times and parental leave to look after sick children.	4
Making supply teaching more attractive	Supply teaching was not generally seen as an attractive prospect. This could be tackled by offering fixed term contracts, greater advance notice of need and devolving management of supply to schools within a fixed budget.	4
Support for returners	Leavers who had been out of teaching for a while or who lacked confidence felt that they needed support through their initial return. Providing a regent or mentor in the school and regular area- or region-based meetings of returners would help provide continued support.	4
Recognition for non-school experience	Some teachers were reluctant to re-enter teaching because of the salary and level at which they would have to return. Giving recognition to appropriate non-school experience would make teaching a more viable option.	4
Discouraging drop-out	Many of the teachers talked of the importance of having a break from teaching to overcome the build-up of feelings of staleness. But there are very few opportunities for teachers to get away from the day-to-day activities of teaching. The structured use of career breaks, sabbaticals, secondment, and other activities to promote professional development could help to prevent loss through disillusionment.	4 4

2 Why Teachers leave Teaching

What makes teachers leave teaching? Having left, are they interested in returning? Can anything be done to stop them leaving in the first place? These are some of the questions tackled in this chapter. Our findings show that the reasons teachers gave for leaving school teaching fell into five main categories. These were:

- childcare and domestic commitments
- personal circumstances
- disillusionment with school teaching
- not obtaining a permanent teaching post
- a career move.

The proportion of teachers who left for each of these reasons is shown in Table 2.1.

***Table 2.1** Most important reason for leaving school teaching*

Reason	Total	Sex		Sector		
	n=508 %	Female n=435 %	Male n=73 %	Primary n=156 %	Secondary n=252 %	Qualified for both n=96 %
Childcare/domestic commitments	47	55	0	61	40	42
Personal Circumstances	21	21	20	24	22	15
Disillusionment	14	11	32	5	15	25
Not obtaining a permanent post	10	9	16	6	12	10
Career move	9	5	31	5	11	8

As can be seen from Table 2.1, almost half of the sample had left teaching because of childcare or domestic commitments and a fifth had left because of a variety of personal circumstances. These are areas which schools and education authorities can do little to influence, although Chapters 3 and 4 discuss measures which could encourage teachers who left for domestic reasons to re-enter the profession. The remaining three categories highlight the sources of dissatisfaction which local authorities may be able to do something about.

Before considering each of the categories in detail, we should make two

points. First, Table 2.1 shows teachers' views of *the most important reason* for leaving teaching. This does not mean that the others were unimportant. For instance, one teacher gave her main reason for leaving teaching as being to have a family. However, she had become disillusioned with teaching because of problems with indiscipline and lack of receptiveness of the pupils. This dissatisfaction had affected her decision about when to start a family and had led her, when she became pregnant, to leave teaching rather than to take maternity leave. Second, we did not ask teachers about their length of service before leaving teaching. We are unable, therefore, to say whether this had an effect on reasons for leaving.

Childcare and domestic commitments

This was the most common reason given for leaving teaching. Not surprisingly, there was a large gender difference: more than half of the women (55%) but none of the men had left teaching because of childcare or domestic commitments. This finding was similar to that of the SOED survey (1990). We also found that there was a sector difference which was probably related to the gender composition of the sectors: three-fifths of the primary but only two-fifths of the secondary teachers had left for childcare or domestic reasons.

The women who left teaching because of childcare or other domestic commitments fell into three main groups. The first and largest group consisted of those who wanted to stay with, and look after, their children at least until they reached school-age. This is illustrated by one woman who said that, even though her mother was willing to look after her child for her, she would rather stay with him herself while he was young.

The second group comprised those women who had tried to combine teaching with parenthood but had found this unsatisfactory and so gave up teaching. Several said that they did not have the energy to teach, fulfil childcare needs and do their household chores. They maintained that either their family or their teaching would suffer if they tried to do both. For example, one teacher told us that she had felt that there was insufficient time for both. Another had not wanted to use a paid childminder when help from relations was no longer available on the birth of her second child. Moreover, her husband's work meant that he was frequently away from home and so was unable to help her with any of the domestic commitments.

The third and smallest group consisted of mainly single mothers who, for financial reasons, did not want to take a break from teaching in order to raise a family but had not been in a teaching post long enough to qualify for maternity leave.

These findings suggest that the majority of women who leave teaching in order to raise a family are unlikely to be persuaded to return at the end of their maternity leave. Most wanted to spend a number of years looking after their pre-school children. However, as many as 89% of this group said that they intended to return to teaching at some point and they suggested factors which might encourage them to return earlier than they

had originally intended. These measures include the provision of childcare facilities, time off to look after sick children and the greater availability of job-share and part-time teaching posts.

Personal circumstances

Over a fifth of teachers had left their last permanent school post because of personal circumstances. Most commonly, it was moving to another part of the country, personal or family illness, or having the opportunity to take early retirement which caused them to leave.

Women were more likely than men to have left because of a geographic move. Many said that this move had been the result of their husband getting a job in another area of the country. In contrast, men were more likely to have left because of personal or family illness or because they had taken early retirement.

Over two-thirds (68%) of those who left teaching because of personal circumstances said that they now thought that they would return to teaching at some time. This high percentage no doubt reflects the fact that, in general, it was external circumstances which led them to leave teaching rather than dissatisfaction with the profession.

Disillusionment with school teaching

Less than a fifth (14%) said disillusionment had been their main reason for leaving teaching. Disillusionment was more common among both men and secondary teachers. It is possible that the gender difference was really a reflection of the sector difference. However, as seen later, a break from teaching was often enough to counter the staleness felt by many teachers who had been in the profession for a while. An alternative explanation, therefore, for the gender difference could be that the break from teaching which many women experience when they leave to have children prevents disillusionment building up to the same extent that it does in men.

Although disillusionment was given as the main reason for leaving by only a minority, it is worth looking in a little detail at the causes of disillusionment. It would be a pity to implement measures to encourage teachers to return only to find that they leave soon afterwards because of disillusionment with the job.

What were the main causes of disillusionment? There seemed to be several inter-related factors, seven of which were mentioned by more than a tenth of all the teachers in the survey. These were (in descending order):

- the way that the education system was run (18%)
- stress (16%)
- low morale in the school (15%)
- lack of support from senior staff in the school (13%)
- discipline problems among the pupils (13%)
- lack of receptiveness on the part of pupils (11%)
- lack of opportunities for promotion (11%).

Similar causes of disillusionment were found by Smithers (1990) among leavers in England and Wales. However, low pay seems to have featured more prominently there than in Scotland. Only 9% of our sample said that they were dissatisfied with pay. Smithers lists pay as the second most frequently mentioned cause of disillusionment. The difference may be partly due to sample differences. About one-third of Smithers' sample schools were drawn from London and the South East where housing costs are higher than in most parts of Scotland. There could also be a gender effect. We found dissatisfaction with pay was more common among men and they formed only 14% of our sample. However, as we shall see, dissatisfaction with pay cropped up in other ways. For example, the lack of opportunities for promotion mentioned by many teachers has financial implications as do complaints about relevant non-school experience not being taken into account in determining salary points.

Disillusionment can be summed up as general low morale. We have teased out the causes of this low morale but it will immediately be obvious that they overlap. For example, stress was associated with indiscipline and the pace of change. We should also mention that the majority of comments generated by the open question at the end of the survey concerned dissatisfaction with the education system and conditions in schools (187 of 373). Again there was some overlap in the causes of dissatisfaction. For example, indiscipline, lack of receptiveness of pupils and a slide in standards have elements of overlap. Similarly, concerns about lack of autonomy, the imposition of too many changes and the need for better school management, seem to have elements in common. We have disentangled the causes to give a flavour of teachers' reasons for leaving teaching.

Looking in more detail at the seven main causes of disillusionment, the most common complaint was a *dislike of the educational system*. In our semi-structured interviews, the teachers gave varying explanations of what they meant by this. For instance, it was thought that too many changes had been imposed on teachers and this had resulted in a feeling of lack of autonomy. Teachers felt that they were being buffeted around by changes to the school system and that they were essentially reacting to changes in their conditions of services, in the curriculum, teaching methods and in assessment, over which they had little control. A particular gripe was the amount of paperwork teachers were now expected to deal with:

> I think teachers are getting far too bogged down with matters out of the classroom. Work is becoming far too much administrative, trying to make your priority the pupil who is at the bottom of this [paperwork] is a struggle!
>
> (Female PE teacher)

The introduction of Planned Activity Time (PAT) was another cause of disillusionment for some teachers:

> If you ask teachers they'll volunteer but once you start laying down you must do this and this, once you do that, I said, 'Oh, I'm not interested'. There's no way you prescribe the duties like that; teachers get very uptight about that sort of thing.
>
> (Male Technical teacher)

In general, the pace and purpose of change was criticised. Teachers complaining about changes to the school system were relatively recent leavers, several having left their post less than six years previously. If disillusionment with change was a common reason for leaving teaching (and certainly 41% of the men said that it had contributed to their decision to leave teaching), one wonders whether current changes in curriculum and assessment will accelerate this trend at least in the short term. We shall see in the next chapter that several aspects of the education system and conditions in schools worried more than 40% of the teachers. Fortunately, however, these worries were not, at present, deterring the majority from intending to return.

Changes had led to many of the teachers feeling under *stress* and for feeling *morale to be low* in schools. The enormous pressure that they felt had caused several either to opt for early retirement or to seek out a period of rest. The stress had also brought out a feeling of being 'stale' in some teachers. One teacher described her feeling thus:

> Having done ten years in one school and having done it straight from school to college, back into school again, [there was] a wee bit of burn-out ... Just, I lacked experience, I think, of the outside world ... I needed out of it, just to freshen up. I felt washed out. I couldn't give the job the energy it required. I still felt that I could teach well but I think it was physical tiredness. I didn't have the energy, the freshness for new ideas. It wasn't a dislike of children or anything. I just felt stale, not fresh enough for children.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

She also described why she thought that the break from teaching would not turn out to be permanent:

> I thought once a teacher, always a teacher. There's always that wee bit in you that lingers on. If you enjoy teaching, it will always be there.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

In the next chapter we shall see how several disillusioned teachers seemed to have benefited likewise through a break from teaching. At the time of leaving, only 28% of those who had been disillusioned intended to return whereas, when we interviewed them, 53% were interested in returning.

Lack of support from senior staff in the school had led a number to feel disillusioned. Sometimes this was explained in terms of poor relationships with senior staff but most often it was related to headteachers not helping to enforce good discipline and often expecting too much from staff in the way of concerts and projects, resulting in a neglect of the more academic aspects:

> [Headteachers] expected an awful lot ... they had forgotten their own classroom days and were giving us more and more projects, schemes, crazy ideas which often didn't work, more and more for the beleaguered teacher who was already under stress with primitive conditions at times and very difficult circumstances.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

Discipline problems among the pupils and *lack of receptiveness on the part of pupils* meant that teaching often seemed to be a struggle:

> ... there was a lack of discipline in the school that I felt powerless to control. Although I enjoyed teaching at that time, I was also very aware of the battle you have to get the kids' attention. You're enthusiastic and want to teach them but they're not particularly receptive.
>
> (Female Home Economics teacher)

A number of the teachers had felt frustrated because, except in the areas of guidance and administration, there seemed to be a *lack of opportunities for promotion*. This dissatisfaction, along with annoyance about experience gained outwith teaching being disregarded when applying for promoted posts, will be discussed again in the final chapter.

Considerable space has been devoted to these elements of disillusionment because they were seen as important both by teachers whose primary reason for leaving had *not* been disillusionment and by those who were now considering returning to teaching. The worries about changes to the school system, indiscipline and support from senior staff, highlight the continuing concerns that leavers had. In our opinion, it is important that these concerns be addressed because, if they are not, returners may become disillusioned again and their return to the profession may be shortlived.

Failure to obtain a permanent post

A tenth of the respondents had left teaching without ever having had a permanent school teaching post. The majority (two-thirds) had tried to obtain a post on completion of initial teacher training but had either been offered no work at all or very sporadic supply work. As a result, they became very disillusioned. They felt that they had trained for several years to no avail and that this did not happen to other professional people — at the end of the day, there were jobs for doctors, lawyers and accountants, so why not for teachers? This was how one teacher expressed her feeling of disillusionment with the lack of teaching posts:

> I think people who have the power should be aware you studied three years - maybe longer to specialise in infants and secondary teaching. Leaving school with high hopes - I'm going to be a primary teacher. For me that was a vocation from when I was a wee girl in primary myself. I think they should be aware ... it's this List [of applications for teaching posts]! Treating people like an under[dog]. What is the point of sending out these [application] forms each year if there are no jobs?
>
> (Female primary teacher)

We found during our case-study interviews that many of the group without experience of a permanent job were fairly mobile within Scotland but even this had not helped them. Several had been willing to travel some distance at the beginning and end of the day and a few had been willing to move and had applied to several local authorities but without

any success. Others, though, had been unwilling to move because of family commitments or a liking of the area in which they lived.

Eventually, financial pressures had forced those newly qualified teachers to take other employment. At the time they got another job, they did not really know whether they would ever return to teaching. This was how one teacher described this career pattern:

> It was either the case that you took the odd day of supply and were unemployed for the rest of the time or you looked for another job. Most of the people I graduated with (1982) did find other jobs and I'm sure a lot of them just never went back [to teaching].
>
> (Female primary teacher)

However, despite the fact that three-quarters of these teachers had finished their training five or more years ago, most (74%) were still interested in going back into teaching at some point.

Among the third who did not apply for teaching posts immediately after finishing their training, this was most commonly because family or domestic commitments made it difficult or they did not want to go into teaching straight away.

A career move

A career move was given as the main reason for leaving school teaching by less than a tenth (9%) of the teachers. There was a gender difference in this group: it was more common among men (31%) than women (5%). Indeed, men were more likely than women to leave teaching both to take another job and to gain further qualifications. They entered diverse areas of employment, such as the media, sales, and other public sector work.

Although a number of other teachers (particularly those who were disillusioned) had taken up non-school employment when they left their last permanent teaching post, the career-move leavers were characterised by what can be thought of as 'positive motivation'. In other words, they left to take up employment in other spheres or to undertake additional training, not because they were disillusioned with teaching, but because there was something else which they particularly wanted to do. This is illustrated by three of the teachers in our case studies. Their reasons for being attracted by other forms of employment differed but they did not include any strong feeling of disillusionment with teaching. For instance, the choice of post of one of these teachers could be seen more as a step in career development in the same field rather than as an alternative to teaching. This teacher left in order to become a superintendent of a children's home:

> I left because I was finding that I didn't want just to teach children subjects, I wanted to deal with the whole child. I was becoming more and more interested in the sort of social background and how we could help the emotional and social side of the child.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

The second teacher, also a primary teacher, taught for a few years and then left to become an air-hostess. She had always wanted to travel and had decided that she should do this while she was still young. In addition, at that time, she had felt that the pay in teaching was low. She did not intend to leave teaching permanently and would have returned sooner if there had not been a shortage of jobs. She is rather atypical in wanting to return to teaching. Only 39% of the teachers in this group now intend to return to teaching at some time. The third teacher was presented with an opportunity to do full-time work on local radio. He felt it was too good a chance to miss although he enjoyed teaching.

Summary

This chapter has described the five main reasons why the teachers in our sample left teaching. The most common reason was childcare. The other reasons, in descending order of importance, were personal circumstances, disillusionment, being unable to obtain a permanent post, and a career move.

Did these teachers intend to leave the profession permanently and have their attitudes to returning since changed? These questions are addressed at the beginning of the next chapter.

3 Barriers to Returning

Many teachers who leave the profession say they would like to return. We were interested in exploring whether attitudes to returning changed over time. Furthermore, how easy was it to return to teaching? This chapter has two main parts. It begins by reporting attitudes to returning and then goes on to look at barriers to return. However, it is important to explain first what was meant by 'returning'. The teachers defined 'returning to teaching' in fairly specific terms. For some, because they had other commitments or interests, it meant undertaking only supply work. For others, supply work was seen in more provisional terms: it was a good way, initially, of 'finding one's feet' again in the classroom but, after some experience of this type of teaching, they hoped to get a permanent post. A third group talked about returning to teaching only if they were able to obtain a permanent full-time or part-time post. Were such posts not available, they would be unlikely to return at all. There was, however, a fourth group who were willing to accept any type of post.

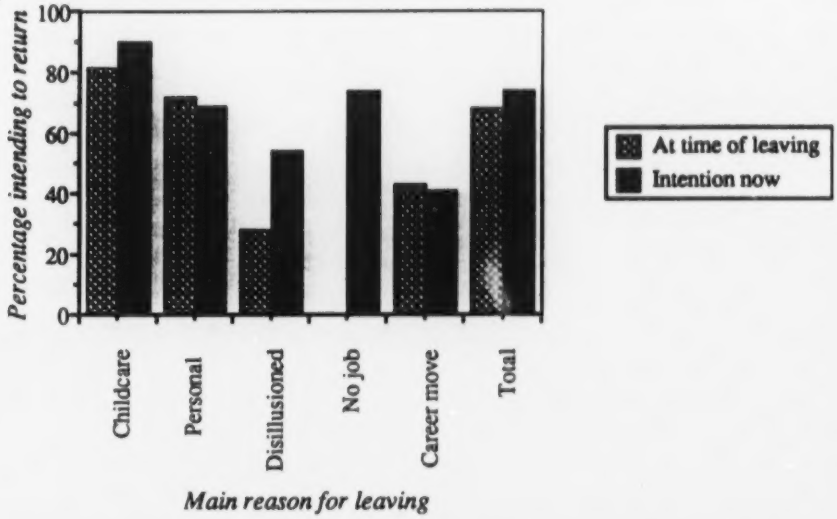
Did the leavers want to return?

The short answer is 'yes'. Almost three-quarters of our sample were positive about returning. Indeed about a third had already gone back to either supply or temporary teaching, almost a fifth wanted to return immediately and a quarter wanted to return sometime in the future. However, it is questionable whether this would hold true for all leavers from the profession. Our sample was taken from those who had maintained their GTC registration and therefore had, to some extent, kept their options open. Similarly, there were differences between the primary and secondary sectors (81% of the former had temporary returned or wanted to return compared to 69% of the latter) and between the sexes (79% of women compared to 45% of men). Nevertheless, the pool of leavers who have maintained their GTC registration is a large one (around 23,000) and our findings suggest that their attitudes to returning are likely to be positive.

Since the leavers studied had kept up GTC registration, does this mean that their intention had always been to return to teaching? The data suggest that this was not necessarily the case. This is illustrated by Figure 3.1 which gives details of the percentage who intended to return when they originally left teaching and the percentage who now wanted to return. It should be made clear that we are not reporting time series data here. We did not interview teachers twice (for example, at the time of leaving and then at a later date). Rather, we asked teachers to recall their original intentions and then asked them what their current intentions were.

Figure 3.1 shows that, among those who had left to have children or because of personal circumstances, the majority had intended to return and this intention had not changed over time. Similarly, interest in returning among career-break leavers had changed little; a substantial minority intended to return.

Figure 3.1 Attitudes to returning



The one group whose intentions had changed was the disillusioned. Although, when they left teaching, only 28% of this group intended to return, now over two-thirds wanted to return. This suggests that not all of those who leave through disillusionment are going to be lost to the profession. Of course, we are not able to pinpoint when the disillusioned changed their minds. However, looking in detail at this group, almost two-thirds had had a break of less than five years and, in particular, 45% had had a break of between three and five years. Similarly, we are unable to say what made this group change their mind about returning. The substantial literature on teacher stress, however, as well as our own data, leads us to speculate that a break can refresh those who left teaching because they felt stale or disillusioned. It may be that interest in returning can be revived among this group although the small numbers involved (71) make it impossible to be definite.

Only just over 10% of the teachers said that they definitely did not want to return. The message from them seemed to be that very few would ever be interested in returning unless there was a great change in their own personal circumstances: for instance, if they or their partner became unemployed or were financially stricken in some way. They tended to say that they were enjoying what they were currently doing, whether it was a job, voluntary work, leisure activities or being a housewife, and really did not see themselves as ever wanting to return. Since they were a relatively small proportion of the sample and appeared very adamant about only returning in exceptional circumstances, it would seem sensible for regional authorities and the SOED not to use resources and energy

trying to encourage them to return. These resources would be better used in encouraging and supporting those who already have an interest in returning. This, however, raises the question of why these teachers need encouragement if they have already expressed an interest. This question is addressed in the rest of this chapter.

What prevents teachers from returning?

Although three-quarters of the teachers were interested in returning, there were several factors which made it difficult for them to do —

- childcare commitments
- difficulties in getting the kind of post they wanted
- worries about the educational system and conditions in schools
- personal circumstances
- conditions of service in teaching
- worries about coping with teaching
- worries about doing supply or temporary teaching.

Table 3.1 shows the relative importance of these.

***Table 3.1** Constraints on returning*

	Very important %	Important %	Not so important %
Childcare (n=435)	38	10	51
Difficulties in getting the kind of post they wanted (n=436)	30	38	32
Worries about the educational system and conditions in schools (n=436)	24	34	43
Personal circumstances (n=437)	20	22	57
Conditions of service (n=436)	12	28	61
Worries about coping with teaching (n=436)	11	29	60
Worries about doing supply or temporary teaching (n=435)	7	19	74

In discussing these factors, we will concentrate mainly on what was seen as *very* important in preventing the teachers from returning. Before doing so there are three points to make.

First, we have not presented the findings for the primary and secondary sectors and for men and women separately. This is because there were no significant differences between the sectors and only two between the sexes – in relation to childcare commitments and worries about the education system and conditions in schools. In the later discussion of these two factors, we describe the differences in more detail.

Second, *not so important* does not mean *unimportant*. It would be misleading to assume that factors regarded as not so important are problem-free.

The final point to be borne in mind is that even if local authorities address the factors which were seen as being 'very important', this will not result in all interested teachers returning immediately to the profession. This is because some leavers, particularly women with young children, had chosen not to return until some time in the future.

In the following discussion of the seven main barriers to return, we include a description of what the teachers thought could be done to support or encourage their return to teaching. A fuller account of these is provided in Chapter 4, where we draw together the implications from the project for what local authorities can do.

Childcare commitments

Childcare was the most common factor which prevented or hindered the teachers from returning - 38% said that this was very important. As one would expect, there was a large gender difference, only 2% of men as against 43% of women gave this as a very important reason for not being in teaching now.

Although childcare commitments stopped many women from returning, the provision of childcare facilities such as creches and nurseries or vouchers, or changes in taxation allowances to include childcare provision, would not necessarily mean that all these women would return. Since many wanted to stay with their children until they at least reached school age, it was their own choice not to return. However, as many as 36% of those teachers who said that they wanted to return to teaching immediately claimed to be prevented from doing so by childcare commitments.

For many of the mothers in our sample, the main worry was about practical arrangements for the supervision of their children before and after school. One returner, for instance, said that it took up to half an hour to travel to her part-time supply job. Because of this early start she had to get a friend to look after her children before they left for school in the morning and then her elderly parents travelled several miles to help look after the children at the other end of the day. For obvious reasons she would prefer a post in a local school as this might allow her to work full-time. Another teacher also explained why having a post in a local school was important to her - her children were involved in a lot of after-school activities and she wanted to be available to take them to and from these.

Worries about what to do if children were ill were also common. One teacher explained that:

> This [when the children are ill] worries me. If I were out full-time what would I do with the children? I would have to get someone that I could say to, 'When the children are ill, can you come in?'. I wouldn't like this because I've always been with them - I'm still pulled if they're ill, that I should be here. Obviously if they have an infectious disease, I can't put them in with other children. So it's difficult. Teaching is not the sort of job that you can phone in and say I'm going to have a day off today.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

These concerns meant that many women were willing to return to teaching only if they could get the type of post which would fit in with their childcare commitments. For the vast majority, such posts were part-time or job-share. Full-time posts were ruled out because they felt that they would not have enough time and energy for both teaching and fulfilling family commitments. This is illustrated by a primary teacher who said that preparation time would be a problem. When she had taught before having a family, she used to do this at home in the evenings but now, with her family commitments, she no longer felt that would be feasible.

Although supply work provided some flexibility in the hours and days worked, it also proved problematic for some because it was difficult to arrange childcare on such an irregular basis and at short notice. One teacher, with a young baby, disliked accepting supply jobs which were far from home as she missed the close contact with her children:

> I wouldn't leave the children with a childminder five days a week ... if I were 15 miles up the road [at a teaching job] you'd always be wondering how they were. Whereas if they were close at hand, I think you'd settle more, you could concentrate on what you're doing.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

In conclusion, the teachers with children had a number of specific needs which would have to be met if they were to return to teaching. These were:

- good quality daycare for pre-school children
- before- and after-school care for older children
- arrangements for the care of sick children
- a greater availability of part-time and job-share posts
- local jobs
- time for school preparation, domestic responsibilities and household chores
- more prior warning about supply jobs.

It is interesting to note here the ingrained assumptions which are made by women themselves about their role. It is they who need to be around when children are ill. It is they who ferry children to various activities. It is they who feel responsible for household chores and hence unable to take on the demands of full-time jobs. These assumptions pervade our findings.

Difficulties in getting the kind of post they wanted

The discussion above suggests that not all of those who wanted to return to teaching were willing to take any post. Some, because of personal circumstances, were quite clear about the type of post they wanted. Indeed, almost a third of all the teachers said that difficulties in getting a specific kind of post was very important in preventing them from returning. And this was a particular problem for those who wanted to return to teaching immediately—42% said that this was very important in preventing their return. So, what were they looking for?

Part-time/job-share posts

Over half (57%) said that one factor making it difficult for them to return was that they felt that permanent part-time or job-share posts were not available. As already indicated, women in particular sought such posts (62% of women; 15% of men) because they wanted to be able to combine childcare responsibilities with teaching. But it was not only mothers who wanted these kinds of posts. Some leavers had taken on other responsibilities which they did not want to give up completely. A retired teacher, for instance, told us that he was only interested in part-time work because, on certain days of the week, he now had other interests and commitments. There were a few teachers who also only wanted part-time work so that they could undertake other forms of employment, often self-employment, for the remainder of the time. This varied career pattern allowed them to combine running their own businesses with the security of a part-time income and also meant that their teaching did not become too stale.

Full-time posts

Just over a quarter of the respondents (29%) felt that the scarcity of full-time posts had made it difficult for them to return. Those who already had permanent non-teaching jobs or were single parents dominated this group. They needed the security of a regular income and so were not willing to consider other types of post.

> ... Three months, six or something like that [supply teaching] and then you'd have no money over the summer holidays, that sort of thing. You know, if you've got a permanent [non-teaching] job, you just don't want to go back. Although I'd love to be teaching, I just can't take the chance.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

> I couldn't give everything up just on the off chance that the phone would ring in the morning [with the offer of supply].
>
> (Male English teacher)

Supply posts

More than a quarter (29%) were keen to do supply or temporary teaching but had been prevented from returning because they thought that such posts were difficult to get. These teachers were particularly interested in supply teaching for a number of reasons— it gave them the chance to ease gently back into teaching; they would not be committed to one particular school and could leave if they did not like it; there was less work and responsibility with this type of post and so they would feel less pressurised; and they could choose when they wanted to work.

The finding that a large proportion did not consider worries about supply teaching to be important does not mean that all is well with it. Nor does it mean that all our teachers were willing to do supply work. An alternative explanation is that many teachers would be unlikely to consider doing it and, therefore, the conditions of service of supply teachers did not

impinge on the possibility of their return to teaching. Indeed, just under one third of teachers said that they did not want to do supply work. There was particular dissatisfaction about status and relationships with colleagues and pupils. It was felt it was not professionally rewarding to be a temporary member of staff. For example, someone who had had some experience of supply work said:

> You're not integrated into the school and your colleagues don't relate in the same way as someone who has a definite fixed position. And the children know someone else is going to come in and replace their own teacher whom they would really rather have.
>
> (Female RE teacher)

Worries about the educational system and conditions in schools

Around a quarter (24%) said that worries about the educational system and conditions in schools had been very important in deterring them from returning. Men (45% as against 29% of women) were particularly concerned.

Many of the concerns were very similar to the reasons which disillusioned teachers gave for leaving. The amount of paperwork that teachers had to do seemed to cause most concern - 60% of all the respondents thought too much of a teacher's time was spent on this. Almost half were worried by what they saw as the rapid pace of change in education, teachers' lack of autonomy over the curriculum, poor resources and facilities in schools, and over-sized classes. And over a third were concerned about discipline.

The emergence of such concern about the educational system and the similarity between these concerns and the factors which led teachers to become disillusioned with teaching, suggest that, unless these worries are dealt with, returners might well become leavers again. It would seem to us to be counter-productive to put a lot of effort into attracting leavers back if the important causes of discontent among teachers are not addressed. This suggests careful recruitment and support strategies for re-integrating returning teachers into schools.

Related to concerns about general changes in the nature of teaching were anxieties about being able to cope. Only 11% said that worries about coping *with teaching* were very important in preventing them from returning. Nevertheless, a third of all the teachers were worried that they now lacked experience of school teaching and just over a half, particularly those in the primary sector, were anxious about their ability to cope with changes in the educational system. Around a quarter felt that, during their absence from the classroom, whether this was long or short, they had lost some confidence and this made going back difficult. For instance, one teacher pointed out that, over the past 12 years, she had not had any experience of teaching other than a one-week stint. She would like to return to teaching but thought that, although she had worked in a children's home during most of this interval, she might need to undergo some retraining. She expressed some reluctance about this. This was how

she and another teacher, who was doing temporary work in the further education sector, described their feelings of anxiety about returning:

> ... I feel although I've got the qualification and have got a lot of experience with children, I feel since I graduated that methods and everything, all will have been changed. I don't know that I'd have the confidence, I would maybe have to go back and retrain all over again. So I would like to [return] but, oh, I'd have to go away back and retrain!
>
> (Female primary teacher)

The English teacher below describes his reluctance to leave the now familiar environment of further education to re-enter the unfamiliar world of school:

> I haven't been in a school since I did my teacher's training [3 years before]. You get - it's not a case of getting scared! I know what I'm doing in FE. If I were back at school, I'd be OK, I know I could do it but it would take a little while - I think it's making the step to go back and start in a school again. There's quite a bit of difference between school and FE. So I would do it but I'd prefer to stay in FE.
>
> (Male English teacher)

Personal circumstances

Personal circumstances were very important in making it difficult for a fifth to return to teaching. There were two main factors. The first, which was much more common among men, was that they were enjoying their present non-school teaching employment and so were not sure if they wanted to leave it. This did not necessarily mean that they did not want to teach. Rather, it was that their present job particularly appealed to them. The second factor was concerned with travel difficulties and was more frequently mentioned by the women. Because of their family commitments, they were unwilling to take a teaching post which would require them to travel far.

Conditions of service

For 12%, dissatisfaction with the conditions of service in teaching was very important in making it difficult for them to return. Various dissatisfactions with the career structure for teachers were mentioned.

A quarter of all the teachers felt that their non-school teaching employment would be disregarded if they applied for promoted posts in teaching and 15% were worried that they might have to go back at a lower level than when they left. For instance, one male computing teacher, who saw himself as well-qualified and experienced but who had not completed the two years probation required for full GTC registration, complained:

> If I did go back into schools, I'd have to do two years' probation. I've now got quite a bit of experience in computing and I'm doing a Masters' degree. I think I could go and teach as principal teacher - there's no chance of that.

Nearly a quarter, particularly male secondary teachers, felt that the pay in school teaching was bad. This was perhaps because some of them (9%) believed they would have to take a drop in income if they went into school-teaching. The same computing teacher quoted above was clear that he would take a salary drop if he left his further education post and re-entered school teaching as a probationer:

> I wouldn't say no definitely [to returning], probably not, simply because of the wages situation. If I were to go into teaching, my salary would drop by £2,000-£3,000 a year because you end up as a probationary, you know, whereas in further education, they take into account your previous experience at work - I've industrial experience.
>
> (Male computing teacher)

The whole question of pay, career structure and in particular the recognition of previous experience needs clarification for intending returners. Among our sample the expectation was that one would probably have to start again at the bottom of the career ladder and that non-teaching experience would be irrelevant in placing on salary scales. In any advertising campaign aimed specifically at returners these matters would need to be explained.

Summary

There are two important points in this chapter. First, over three-quarters of teachers who left intended to return at some time in the future. Even among those who had left because they became disillusioned with teaching, over two-thirds intended to return. This led us to speculate that a break from teaching may recharge batteries and encourage positive feelings about returning.

Second, the most important barrier to returning was the lack of quality childcare. This, and the limited availability of job-share and part-time teaching posts, seemed to be the greatest constraints on returning. These are areas where education authorities might have some room for manoeuvre.

Teachers themselves suggested a range of strategies which education authorities could employ to ease their return to schools. We report these in the next chapter.

4 What Employers Might Do

This chapter highlights actions which educational authorities could take to encourage and improve returning to teaching. These suggestions stem from a number of sources; some, and we have made it clear where this is the case, are direct findings from the semi-structured interviews and telephone survey; others are more speculative and were inferred from the data or existing research literature.

Before looking at the detail, it is worth pointing out that 74% of teachers wanted to add comments at the end of the telephone interview. These ranged across a variety of areas. However, of those comments concerned with specific measures to encourage return, over 160 identified the provision of suitable posts. The emphasis was on permanent posts and on part-time or job-share posts. In our opinion, this finding reflects two features of the current situation in Scotland. First, there is at present no teacher shortage and so intending returners are probably faced with rather limited job opportunities. Second, many of those interested in returning are women with children and they tend to want only part-time work. We can see this more clearly in Table 4.1 which shows the main barriers to return together with the teachers' suggestions about what might be done.

Table 4.1 Specific measures to encourage return

Barrier mentioned	Number citing barrier	Suggested action	Number suggesting this action
Lack of recent experience/coping with change	263	Refresher courses	231
Uunable to get part-time/job-share post	248	Provision of more part-time posts	248*
Childcare in general	173	More part-time posts available	168
		Leave if children ill	164
		Flexible starting and finishing times	153
		Childcare facilities	123
Unwillingness to do supply	95	Provision of part-time posts	95*
Difficulties of doing supply because of childcare	88	Better notice of supply	75

*Inferred—not asked directly

We identified six main areas where teachers thought more could be done. These are presented in time sequence, beginning with keeping in touch with teachers when they leave, through to measures to support them once they return:

- keeping in touch with teachers
- information about vacancies
- reintroduction to teaching
- support for returners in schools
- conditions of service
- childcare.

Keeping in touch with teachers

The data revealed considerable anxiety about lack of recent experience and so being able to cope on return, cited by over 260 teachers. Teachers were aware that many changes had recently taken place in schools. Such changes included the introduction of Standard Grade courses, the 5-14 programme, the greater use of computers and an increase in emphasis on science in primary schools. As reported earlier, some teachers thought that, once they had left the classroom, they very quickly lost touch with teaching methods, curriculum and administrative changes and, as a result, felt uneasy about their ability to handle classes. This resulted in a loss of confidence and so the desire to return to teaching was reduced. This was how one teacher, who had been away from permanent teaching for only just over six months, described the build-up of her anxiety about being away from school:

> I think the longer I was away, the more worried I'd be about going back into it, thinking I was perhaps not so qualified or up-to-date with the things that have been going on and it would be much more of a hurdle. Because there's no means of finding out what has gone on once you're out - once you're out, you're out! You read a lot in the papers and things but it's not the same as being amongst it all ... Not just the work, the curriculum and things change, but the children - being on the same wavelength with them - keeping up with the current ways of thinking - the discipline and whatnot.
>
> (Female Physical Education teacher)

This would suggest there is a need for teachers, when they are taking a break from teaching, to have some means of keeping in touch with what is actually going on in the classroom itself. It is not enough just to be made aware of certain changes through reading newspapers; several teachers appeared to need more of a foot-hold in the classroom itself. A few local authorities have tackled this in a very practical way. For instance, West Sussex County Council runs a Keep-in-Touch (KIT) scheme. The original aim of KIT was to explore ways in which LEA support for teachers not currently in paid employment might contribute to reducing the problem of supply cover. However, with the growing shortage of teachers in England, the scheme assumed a new importance. Among KIT activities are monthly support meetings, a monthly newsletter, creche provision and in-service training to prepare and give confidence to returning teachers (Buzzing, 1989). Some authorities in Scotland may already have schemes in operation or be about to set them up but none of our teachers mentioned that they were aware of any such activities. Several, however, expressed

the wish that the Regions would keep in touch with them as this might help to give them the confidence to return. One teacher, who approved of this in principle, did not think it very practical and said:

> It's difficult because they have too many teachers. It wouldn't be in their best interest to keep tabs on people they don't want. It's a bit unrealistic, isn't it? It's nice to think that they would keep in touch!
>
> (Female primary teacher)

Information about vacancies

Some potential returners who had placed their names on waiting lists for posts were very dissatisfied with the way in which Regions responded. They felt they were not being given clear information about their chances of getting a job in the future; they received no acknowledgement when they returned job applications each year; and they were provided with no information about courses or retraining schemes. This led them to feel very disillusioned with teaching because they did not feel as though they were being treated as professionals. This was how they described present Regional efforts to keep in touch with teachers:

> [We need] more encouragement really. There's nothing worse than having to phone constantly to somebody to see if there's any information on posts. It's very demoralising.
>
> (Female Home Economics teacher)

> We weren't kept up-to-date with information - you know, you'd think maybe they'd have a sort of letter which they could send out, saying there's liable to be so many vacancies. You get no information. When you phone X - sometimes they can't find your file ... it just doesn't seem organised. When people have studied hard for four or five years, you're looking for something more positive at the end of it. ... I have had an unhappy experience of going in for teaching.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

> They send me a letter about once a year to fill out and send back. They never acknowledge the procedure or anything. You just don't know where you are.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

Since the Regions are already sending out letters and forms asking teachers to give details about the types of jobs they would like, it might be a good idea to enclose further information. This could include information about any courses or reintroduction schemes available and, in this way, the process of being kept on file may appear less stark and impersonal to the teachers. Using existing mail-outs would mean that the Region would not be involved in considerable extra expense.

Several of the teachers said that they used the press as a means of hearing about the job situation or courses. But one teacher, who had moved from England to Scotland and was willing to move almost anywhere for a job, said that she had great difficulty in knowing where there were vacant posts as there seemed to be very little information in the

press. It was possible to find out quickly about jobs in England because headteachers, rather than education authorities, advertised posts and were in control of appointments for their own schools. One cannot help wondering whether this method of finding staff might not be preferable to central offices keeping large files which, according to some of our teachers, led to confusion as their records sometimes got lost and potential returners did not know what their chances of employment were. Press announcements might also be a useful method of keeping in touch with a large number of leavers, particularly those who no longer had their names on waiting lists or on the GTC register.

A few headteachers or heads of department did seem to be keeping in touch with their former staff and this proved useful when they needed supply staff. Some teachers in our sample said that they had got supply work this way and it was useful as they knew what to expect when returning to a school with which they were already familiar. It would seem, therefore, that keep-in-touch schemes, particularly those organised at a local level, may help to encourage leavers back.

Reintroduction to teaching

About 45% of teachers felt that they would benefit from some type of reintroduction to teaching. The emphasis on refresher courses is hardly surprising given the worries about coping with recent curriculum and assessment changes and the scarcity of keep in touch schemes. Interestingly enough, the need for refresher or updating courses was not confined to those who had been away from teaching for a long time. People who had been out of the classroom for as little as six months expressed a need for such a course. Some Regions already offer courses and this was welcomed. The fee for some courses was a deterrent. For instance, there was criticism of a £90 fee for a primary teachers' refresher course provided by a college of education, especially when there was no guarantee of a job at the end of the course. Interestingly enough, however, such courses tend to be oversubscribed. There then seems little chance of Regions paying intending returners to attend such courses, one suggestion made by our interviewees.

The type of refresher course which was seen as most appealing consisted of a mixture of actual classroom experience, either observing and/or teaching, combined with information about new methods and content change. This was how one teacher described the approach to reintroduction which she would like:

> A refresher course generally, with all people returning to teaching and then maybe a week's refresher course in a home economics department of another school to the one you're about to go into ... so you can drown a bit and not make a fool of yourself in front of the pupils you'll actually be teaching in the long term ... that would be tremendous ... but it would depend on whose cash there'd be ... I don't think many people wanting to go back would be particularly prepared to pay money for it - they might be prepared to support themselves doing it but not actually to pay for it.
>
> (Female Home Economics teacher)

Over a third of those surveyed wanted to dispense with all formal input and instead wanted to have the opportunity to speak to practising teachers combined with spells of classroom observation. One leaver felt that the most useful form of reintroduction would be visiting schools, talking to teachers and sitting in on classes:

> After having been away for so long, I think that would be of great help - possibly, even more help in a way than a refresher course because I think what you get from the grass roots, from the actual teacher doing the job, would be better than sitting in a lecture room, being told what the modern methods were in theory. You'd be better going back to the grass roots and get teachers to tell you rather than be told by a lecturer.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

A few teachers had managed to arrange for themselves this type of reintroduction. They considered that this experience had greatly facilitated their return to teaching. For instance, one returner had asked the headteacher of her children's school to let her come in as a voluntary teacher for three mornings a week over one year:

> I arranged to do this on a voluntary basis just to brush up on all the things that had changed since I'd last been here ... I just approached the headteacher ... I benefited from that - I did feel more confident working supply ... I'd have been terrified to face a primary 6 or 7 class if I hadn't done my 'wee refresher course' in our local school ... I also got a lot of pointers from the teachers in the school.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

This method of reintroduction entails a high level of commitment which many teachers could not undertake for financial or childcare reasons. In addition, some might not feel that they had sufficient confidence to initiate such a scheme. Nevertheless, some returners might appreciate this type of refresher opportunity over a shorter period. It might be a particularly appropriate method in more remote areas where it would be difficult to attend courses at a college.

Another primary teacher described the way in which she had been reintroduced to teaching. Through her friendship with a headteacher, she arranged to sit in on classes and observe. She thought that this was a good way of regaining confidence since it allowed her to be reintroduced to teaching without the pressure of being responsible for a class. She advocated that this method should be more widely available:

> If schools could say 'any time within the month of say March, anyone can 'phone up and we'll arrange for you to come in'. That would be very helpful.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

Such an approach might enable some of the less confident teachers to be stimulated into returning sooner. It could act as a stepping stone for those who did not feel ready to embark on a college reintroductory course. Some of the leavers had pointed out that it was difficult to know what schools were like once they left teaching. An invitation of this nature

would also be a useful way for headteachers to find out about potential returners who lived in the area. If there was another 'flu epidemic like that of winter 1990, this information could be very useful. Moreover, such returners would be fairly up-to-date with conditions in schools.

Before leaving the subject of refresher courses, it is worth noting that there was interest in attending regional in-service courses. It was pointed out to us that the time during a career break to bring up children was ideal for going on such courses as one often had the time then which could be used to retain one's teaching skills. Regions may wish to consider opening certain aspects of their in-service provision to those intending to return to teaching as part of a keep-in-touch scheme.

Finally, it is worth stressing that some of the teachers had attended updating courses and had found them very helpful. Topics included primary science teaching, computing, modern languages and maths.

We have devoted some space to various ways of reintroducing teachers to schools because of the anxiety expressed about keeping up-to-date with new developments in curriculum and assessment. However, a minority of teachers believed that they did not need any refresher training and that they would soon find their feet once they were back in the classroom. We have no way of knowing how well-founded this belief is. However, our data on teachers' anxieties and on their previous disillusionment with schools suggests to us that returners will need direct support on their return to school to help that return be productive and rewarding for all concerned.

Support for returners in schools

Those who have been out of teaching for a while or who lack confidence need support when they return. Various suggestions were made by our interviewees as to how schools could support them. They thought that headteachers, heads of department and other teachers could all play a part.

One young teacher, who was doing supply work, said that it was difficult to go into a staffroom full of strangers but if one teacher was asked to act as a 'regent', this would help:

> Some teachers when they're newly started find it very hard to sort of break into the staffroom. It's quite a daunting prospect; I know myself when you are quite young and you go into the staffroom for the first time. Maybe you could enlarge a bit on the role of the teacher who's meant to look after you, your regent, the regent system. One teacher takes you under their wing until you can find your feet. ... This helps you settle down as quickly as possible.
>
> (Male Maths/Science teacher)

Our interviewees also thought that it would be useful to be able to meet teachers in a similar situation from their own and other schools:

> I suppose if I returned to teaching there would be other people in the same position - strange and unsure. Maybe to get together a group of

> people in the same position as myself to reassure one another that you're not on your own feeling like this. And maybe with teachers who have been teaching all this number of years, there to say you're doing all right and to build up your confidence.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

Some Regions run probationer-support groups on precisely this rationale. Support groups for returners would seem a worthwhile development of this. Indeed, one teacher said that she thought that support for teachers should be long term; she felt that more on-going training and counselling after the probationary period should be available to teachers. This might help to prevent the build up of stress or disillusionment in some teachers and so prevent them from becoming ill or leaving.

Headteachers and senior members of staff were seen as important sources of help in easing returners back into school life. Where this support was forthcoming it was generally welcomed:

> I have a particularly good head of department, so everything is very good in my position. It might have been different if I'd been at a different school or in a different area ... very supportive in my own department and the school in general.
>
> (Female Maths teacher)

Where it was not, it was missed. Could headteachers' and senior management training take this on board?

Some teachers, rather than wanting personal sources of support, felt that other types of support were much more important. These included more administrative help, more remedial or supply staff, more books, better equipment, resource centres and smaller classes. This type of support is obviously relevant to all teachers, not just returners, and, unlike the support which we discussed earlier in this section, has large financial implications.

Conditions of service

In this section, we look at the changes which could be made in conditions of service in order to facilitate the return of teachers. We focus on three matters: kind of post, the introduction of breaks from teaching, and salary and experience.

Kind of post

Part-time/Job-share. The research suggested that increasing the provision of part-time or job-share posts is probably the most effective single thing which Regions can do to encourage women back into teaching. Almost all teachers citing childcare as a barrier to return advocated greater provision of part-time employment. This was perceived as being marginally more important than the provision of childcare facilities in their local area or flexible school starting and finishing times for parents although these would be welcomed. Three reasons were given for wanting this kind of post —

- lack of time or energy to combine full-time teaching with housework and other family commitments
- reluctance to leave children with paid childminders every day of the week
- some only wanted to leave their children with relations or close friends and they could only get this help for part of the week.

Such teachers complained about regulations for job-share which they found paradoxical, for example, that the Regions only allowed teachers to job-share after they had completed two years of full-time teaching. How could they be expected to do that when they had young children? The frustration at the lack of opportunities for part-time or job-share posts is captured by the following primary teacher who had just turned down an offer of long-term supply:

> It just doesn't suit me just now because of the wee ones being so young so I just couldn't take it. Just now I'm really only interested in short-term supply but I was in two minds - I thought 'Oh, that would have been really good' - because I've not worked out my probation yet and that would really have been a good long spell and I felt it really would have been good for me. But it was just the problems of baby-sitting. If it hadn't been full-time, if it had been job-share or something like that, it would have been ideal. You've got to be on full-time employment in order to get a job-share. But I said to Mrs X [supply organiser] the majority of people who are out of teaching have young families and couldn't do full-time. If there's a shortage of teachers, you'd think they'd come to some kind of arrangement.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

Some teachers were concerned that their career or promotion chances would be jeopardised if they only undertook part-time work. There seems to be a need to structure the careers of returners who wish to follow a career pattern involving some years in this type of post, so that they will not be penalised.

Supply teaching. We should say at the outset that some teachers were perfectly content to do only supply work. It was a useful source of income without the pressure or commitments of full-time regular teaching. We were struck, however, by the dissatisfactions expressed about supply teaching both personally and professionally from many supply teachers. The following courses of action are offered for Regions to make supply work more attractive. Most of these suggestions come from teachers themselves and we have no way of knowing how easy they would be to implement in current educational authority structures. What we do know is that there is considerable dissatisfaction with current supply arrangements among supply teachers.

- Ensure that notice of permanent vacancies is easily available to all those on supply lists. Although vacancies are circulated to schools, the circulation may or may not coincide with the presence of supply staff. Supply staff could be encouraged to drop in to schools or local libraries to scan vacancies.

- Enhance the status of supply by ensuring that those who have worked for a specified length of time are automatically invited for interview when a permanent post becomes available.
- Offer supply contracts for fixed terms of say six months or one year. Continuity of employment would attract staff who were in other jobs and who could not risk leaving permanent employment for casual work.
- Where possible, give adequate notice of demand and express appreciation. Supply teachers talked about 'being cast aside like a worn glove' after going to considerable trouble to oblige a school by turning up at a moment's notice.
- Think about using supply as a structured and planned re-entry to teaching as part of refresher/updating courses.
- Arrange induction for returners doing supply. They particularly appreciate spending an initial half-day with the teacher for whom they will be covering.
- Where possible, give continuity of school.
- Devolve responsibility for supply within fixed budgets to individual schools.

Interestingly, quite a few of those who had been disillusioned and had taken early retirement were now interested in returning to occasional teaching. However, several said that their Regions would not re-employ retired teachers. It would seem to us that, if there is a shortage of teachers, it would be wasteful not to make use of these experienced and often willing teachers.

Breaks from teaching

In our opinion there is a case to be made for building breaks into the career structure of teachers. Such breaks might help prevent the loss of teachers from the profession. There are two types of break which we believe are worthy of consideration. These are managed career breaks for women and sabbaticals for long-serving teachers.

Managed career breaks. Many female teachers wanted to have a few years away from teaching in order to have a family. At the moment, local education authorities do not have any managed career-break schemes to encourage these women to return to teaching although we understand that one authority is currently planning such a scheme. Other professions, such as banking and lawyers, have gone some way towards setting up such schemes in order to retain their female work-force. In England, the National Association of Schoolmasters and the Union of Women Teachers has advocated the provision of managed career breaks. They suggested that each teacher taking such a break should undertake at least 10 days' paid teaching during each year away and also be offered the opportunity of part-time work on return. The career break could last up to seven years

and employers would give a commitment to re-employ the teacher at any point during that period (*The Guardian*, August 1990). This would have the advantage of these teachers not losing their confidence and their teaching skills while, at the same time, keeping their knowledge of methods and curriculum up-to-date. Moreover, education authorities would have more information about the pool of teachers available to them.

Sabbaticals. One way in which it may be possible not to lose these people from the teaching profession altogether might be to allow teachers to take breaks, perhaps for retraining, further study or even, as one teacher suggested, for a sabbatical:

> They should think seriously about sabbaticals for teachers, of the kind that happen, say, I know in Canada and I think in New Zealand as well, where teachers accumulate the right to be off 6 months every five years or a year in every 10 years, something like that. Just the thought that you'd have that built in and you'd be able to look forward to it. I think would be a tremendously attractive thing for teachers.
>
> (Male English teacher)

Perhaps sabbaticals of the type available to university staff might be appropriate for teachers. The staff would therefore be accountable for their salaries and would be required to put forward a plan outlining how the sabbatical would be used and report on this later. Even a term's sabbatical might be enough to refresh those teachers who felt that they were becoming stale.

Breaks from teaching could also be made available in the form of unpaid leave of absence or the greater use of secondment. Such breaks might refresh teachers and prevent them from leaving permanently. Of course, some people might say that teachers already have long holidays in which to recuperate. But perhaps there is something about teaching itself - for instance, the enclosed world of a school or being mainly with children rather than with other adults - that creates the need to get away from it for a while to do something different.

One teacher admitted that, once he was away from the restrictions of the classroom, his problems seemed to lessen. He had left because he was 'so fed up' but, after a short spell of retirement, he felt that it was a pity that his Region would not re-employ retired people because he would 'quite like to return'. He explained how his break had eased his feeling of stress:

> Once you're outside, you discover there's a big world out there, teachers are very insular, I've discovered, there's another world outside ... In a classroom, small problems become big problems! One of the problems is teachers try to keep them in the classroom. Nowhere else for them to go!
>
> (Male Technical teacher)

We did not explore either managed career breaks or sabbaticals in our survey and so the benefits of either are entirely speculative. However, the literature on teachers' stress (Johnstone, 1989) suggests that many of the causes of disillusionment mentioned by our teachers are well known

sources of stress. It may well be that a coping strategy for stress was a break from teaching. At a commonsense level this seems plausible. It is also worthy of comment that sabbaticals are recognised as important and beneficial in university teaching.

Salary and experience

Some of the teachers interviewed were reluctant to re-enter teaching because of the salary and the level at which they would have to return. Several made the point that the experience which they had gained in industry or further education, for example, was relevant to teaching and should be taken into account on return. Perhaps some consideration should be given to this idea because we certainly came across a number of teachers who were interested in returning but were unwilling to take the drop in salary which this would entail. If, however, previous experience were taken into account, such teachers might be attracted back into the profession.

We should also point out that it is not only career experience which is relevant to teaching. Women who have taken time off teaching to raise a family also have relevant experience. As was argued by Macintosh (1990), parenthood does not detract from teaching but it adds another dimension by providing a better understanding of child development and the difficulties faced by parents.

Childcare

Both this and the SOED (1990) survey found that the most common reason why female teachers left teaching was to raise a family. The majority of the teachers in our sample who left for this reason did not see themselves as leaving teaching permanently and wanted to return. Indeed, some had already started doing supply teaching. The main barrier to return for women in this group was family commitments; they wanted to look after their pre-school children themselves and so did not want to return until their children were older. A few had used childminders and had tried returning to teaching but had found that they did not have enough time or energy to care for their children and to teach. As we saw in an earlier section, they felt the best solution was part-time work or job-sharing.

Creches

Several teachers felt that they might have been encouraged to return sooner if there was more information from Regions about suitable childminders or if creches were available in schools. They cited examples of friends or relatives who lived in England and had returned to teaching because the authorities had provided creche facilities within schools. They liked the idea of their young children being close to them when they were teaching since this provided the opportunity to see them during lunch breaks or at intervals:

> At the stage [with a very young child], the ideal situation would be a creche in the school ... [if that were not possible] perhaps local

> childminders, a list of childminders who were within, perhaps, five minutes of the school so you could go at lunchtime or, if there were any major problems, you'd be available.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

> I would prefer the educational authorities to take that [childcare facilities] on board so the children get the right kind of care, rather than less satisfactory care which some of the mothers might be forced to use. Some childminders might be grand while some might not be grand. If it were done by the educational authorities, you might have more chance of it being right. I think the children are important.
>
> (Female primary teacher)

One teacher pointed out that having childcare facilities in the school had allowed her niece to return to teaching when her baby was very young because she could continue to breastfeed. Other teachers saw school-based childcare facilities as helping to solve the problem of travel between home, childminder and school. In order to make such provision financially viable, it was suggested that parents living in the same area could share school creche facilities and before-school and after-school care.

We are not suggesting that by providing such facilities educational authorities will attract back all teachers with young children. Nevertheless, two-thirds of the teachers with childcare commitments did express a wish for more childcare facilities in a school's local area and none of them mentioned being offered a nursery place. Those who were working had had to make their own arrangements for childcare.

Other childcare support

There were other strategies which women with childcare commitments thought would facilitate their return. A large number (over four-fifths) considered that flexible school starting and finishing times would make it easier for them to return to teaching because they would be able to drop their own children off at their respective schools and meet them when they finished. In addition, many parents raised the question of what they were expected to do when their children were ill. One interviewee suggested that teachers should be entitled to maternal and paternal leave in such circumstances, in the same way as a few other professionals were. (See, for example, the wide-ranging package offered by Leicester City Council (Meade-King, 1990) which, among other things, offers nursery places, five year career break schemes, paternity leave and a compassionate leave scheme which allows people to take time off to care for sick children.) Certainly, over 90% of those who indicated that childcare commitments made it difficult for them to return said that parental leave to look after sick children would facilitate their return to teaching.

Summary

This chapter has suggested some practical and, in as much as possible, fairly inexpensive ways of keeping in touch with teachers, preparing them for a return to the classroom and helping them when they have actually

returned. These suggestions came from the teachers. Many Regions and schools may already be carrying out some or all of them. For those who are not, we provide a brief check-list of the ways in which teachers felt their return might be encouraged and helped.

Keeping in touch with potential returners

- a more friendly, encouraging and informative approach from the Regions for those seeking employment
- more information in the press about jobs, refresher courses and retraining opportunities
- a newsletter
- regular meetings with support groups.

Re-introduction to teaching

- more refresher courses, particularly those including team teaching or classroom observation
- opportunities to visit schools and observe classes
- availability of mainstream in-service provision to intending returners
- abolition of fees for refresher courses.

Types of posts and facilities for returners

- a better deal for supply teachers, including more security, increased contact and the guarantee of an interview for permanent posts after a period of time doing supply
- more job-sharing and part-time posts
- more childcare facilities in schools
- lists of childminders who are in the vicinity of the school
- before-school and after-school provision for teachers' children
- a compassionate leave scheme to allow parents to take time off to care for sick children.

In schools

- a regent system for new returners
- more opportunities to mix with colleagues and teachers from other schools and, in particular, with other returners
- a career-break scheme
- sabbaticals for long-serving teachers
- continuous counselling/training advice for all teachers.

Despite the fact that teacher shortages have not yet hit Scotland, we believe that education authorities may find many of the suggestions

helpful. In particular, the measures concerned with types of posts, childcare facilities, career breaks and sabbaticals are as relevant to existing employees as to potential returners. They could enhance the attractiveness of teaching as a long-term career and, in doing so, both reduce staff turnover and make teaching a more inviting prospect for new entrants.

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Appendix A: Research Design And Methods

Our research followed a survey carried out by the Scottish Office Education Department in April 1989 in which a postal questionnaire was sent to around 23,000 non-practising teachers who were registered with the General Teaching Council, the pre-requisite for being able to teach in a state school in Scotland. 12,900 replied. This method of identifying leavers was used by the SOED because it was felt that time and cost constraints would make it impractical to trace all non-practising teachers. From the initial survey, quantitative data on issues such as teachers' reasons for leaving the profession and the likelihood of their return were obtained (SOED, 1990). Our research was designed to follow up in more depth some of the issues raised in the SOED survey. It was in two stages. Stage One consisted of a series of semi-structured interviews with 46 non-practising teachers. This provided the basis for Stage Two, structured telephone interviews with 508 non-practising school teachers.

Stage 1

The sample

Stage 1 involved in-depth interviews with a small sample of non-practising teachers. This sample was selected from those respondents who, in the SOED survey, said that they would be willing to be contacted again. Four factors were used in the selection of the sample:

1. *Interest in returning to teaching.* The sample was selected from those in what is termed 'the active pool': that is, those teachers who said that they wanted to return to teaching within a year. This group were seen as being the most important from the point of view of meeting immediate staffing needs.
2. *Primary/secondary sectors.* Approximately 55% of teachers in Scottish education authority schools are in the secondary sector. We therefore wanted to reflect this proportion in our sample. Given the time and resources available, we planned to interview 44 teachers, 24 of whom would be in the secondary and 20 in the primary sector. It should be noted that the secondary school sample was not designed to reflect particular subject areas.
3. *Gender.* Previous research (eg Acker, 1989) has suggested that different factors influence the employment decisions of men and women. We, therefore, wanted our sample to include both sexes. However, because the number of male primary teachers is so small we decided to randomly select the 20 primary teachers. In the event, all of the primary teachers in the sample were female. In contrast, the sample of secondary teachers was designed to provide equal numbers of men and women.
4. *Reasons for leaving teaching.* We hypothesised that those who left teaching for different reasons might show different propensities to return. We, therefore, selected the sample on the basis of the four main reasons given in the earlier SOED survey. These were:
   - to take a career break (eg to raise a family, to seek further qualifications)
   - to take up non-teaching employment
   - disillusionment
   - being unable to find a teaching post.

The sample was designed to provide equal numbers (11) in each 'reason for leaving' group. Five in each group were to be primary teachers. The remaining

6 were to be secondary teachers, made up of equal numbers of men and women.

In practice, the sample aimed for, and that achieved, turned out to be a little different, for the following reasons:

1. The SOED had provided us with a sample size which was twice that which we needed. This was to allow for non-response and for those who, in the time intervening between the two surveys, had found permanent teaching posts. However, for one of the groups (female secondary teachers who had left to take a non-teaching post) we were only able to obtain a sample of 2 rather than 3 teachers.
2. We designed our timetable so that the letters which we sent asking teachers whether they were willing to take part in our survey were dispatched at different times. We decided to interview all those who replied even if we had filled our quota for that particular group. As a result, we interviewed one additional teacher in the primary disillusioned group and two additional teachers in the secondary disillusioned group.
3. We found that 2 of those who had indicated in the SOED survey that they were secondary teachers, in fact turned out to be primary teachers.
4. During our interviews we were able to discuss at length with the teachers their reasons for leaving teaching. We found that in some cases this discussion revealed that there was some difference between the reasons given in the SOED survey and those which had actually precipitated their leaving. This was most common among those who had originally said that they left teaching in order to take up non-teaching employment. Further probing suggested that disillusionment had led them to seek non-teaching alternatives.

Appendix B gives the sample profile.

Research methods

Semi-structured interview schedules were developed for each of the four 'reason for leaving' groups. These covered such matters as reasons for leaving teaching, current employment, interest in returning to teaching, barriers to return and ways in which return could be facilitated.

The sample covered the whole of Scotland. Time constraints meant that it was impossible to conduct all of the interviews face-to-face. Since our pilot work had shown that both telephone and face-to-face interviews produced data of similar quality and nature, we decided to use a mixture of both methods. As a result, of the 46 teachers in the sample, half were interviewed face-to-face and half by telephone. All of the interviews were tape-recorded and content analysed and the teachers were allocated to groups according to the main reasons which they gave for leaving teaching.

Stage 2

The sample

Stage 2 was a telephone survey of 508 non-practising teachers. The sample, as in the first stage of the project, was selected from respondents who, in the SOED (1990) survey, said they would be willing to be contacted again. This time, however, the sampling frame was widened and included all leavers irrespective of their interest in returning to teaching as long as they were under 60 years of age.

The sample was selected for us by the SOED. The following factors were used:

1. *Primary/secondary sectors.* Although our Stage 1 work had not suggested large differences between primary and secondary teachers, we thought that both sectors should be represented in the sample. This was because we felt that, if differences did exist, there could be important implications for staff planning in the different sectors. The sample was selected to provide a split of approximately two-thirds secondary and one-third primary teachers. Since so few primary teachers tend to be male, this division was used because it was thought that it would provide a large enough pool of men from the secondary sector to allow statistical comparisons to be made between men and women.

2. *Age.* The findings from Stage 1 had suggested that leaving and returning to teaching were often related to life circumstances or changes (for instance, having a family, staleness after having been in teaching for a number of years, wanting to take early retirement). Although age is a rather crude indicator of life stages, we felt that it would provide us with the opportunity to include respondents with a variety of different life circumstances. In the sample selection, the proportion in each age group within the sectors was designed to reflect the proportion in the SOED sampling frame.

Gender and reasons for leaving teaching were not used as factors in the Stage 2 sample selection. A trial selection by SOED using only sector and age had shown that the sexes would be adequately represented. This, in fact, proved to be the case and the gender composition of our sample matched that of the sampling frame. And our Stage 1 work had shown us that it was difficult to predict from the teachers' reasons for leaving what their present 'barriers' to return were. An example will illustrate this. One teacher had left teaching because she had been unable to get a permanent post. Since leaving teaching she had had a child. Her main 'barrier' to return, now, was not the lack of permanent posts but the lack of availability of childcare facilities.

SOED provided us with a sample which, within each group, was three times as large as the required number to be surveyed. This was to allow for non-response, teachers now having permanent school teaching posts, leavers not willing to take part in the survey and so on. The potential respondents in each group were arranged in random order and we worked through the sample in sequence until the required number of interviews was achieved. This was to allow, as far as possible, for a random sample of interviewees within each group.

Altogether in two separate waves, 939 letters were sent out asking the teachers if they were willing to take part in the telephone survey. Of these, 61 were willing to talk to us but had already obtained permanent posts. 508 agreed to take part and were interviewed. The remaining 370 teachers either did not want to take part, had moved away, would not be available during the five weeks of the survey or did not reply. Once again the intended and actual samples turned out to be a little different. There were two main reasons for this:

1. In the SOED survey, all those who were qualified to teach in both the primary and secondary sectors were treated, for statistical purposes, as secondary teachers. We decided to treat such teachers as a separate group. Almost a fifth (97) of our respondents said that they were qualified to teach in both sectors. Most commonly, their secondary subjects were Home Economics, Art, and Physical Education.

2. The SOED survey was undertaken around 18 months before our telephone survey. In the intervening time, the respondents had got older and inevitably some were then in different age groups. This meant that the under 30s were under-represented and that a new group - 60 years or over - was formed.

Table A1 shows the way in which the intended sample of 500 was designed to reflect sectors and age groups. It also shows the distribution of the actual sample.

Table A1 *The stage 2 intended and actual samples*

	Only primary teachers		Only secondary teachers		Both P & S
	Intended n=150	Actual n=156	Intended n=350	Actual n=254	Actual n=97
Age Groups	%	%	%	%	%
Under 30	10	5	10	5	7
30–34	20	18	19	17	13
35–39	27	28	24	24	18
40–49	27	33	26	35	19
50–59	17	15	21	17	38
60 or over	0	1	0	2	4

Research methods

An interview schedule was developed which, while having some open questions, contained mainly closed ones. It contained questions covering four main areas:

- Background information (sector in which qualified to teach, subject, whether and when a permanent school teaching post had been held, recent supply or temporary teaching experience, current employment, age, children).
- Reasons for leaving teaching (all reasons and the most important one); intentions, at the time of leaving of eventual return.
- Interest in returning to school teaching (either immediately or in the future).
- Factors which made it difficult to return to teaching (all factors and the very important ones); the ways in which return might be facilitated.

Interviewers were employed specifically for the survey and were trained in both telephone interviewing and in using the interview schedule. The survey took place over a five week period in October and November 1990 with most of the calls being made between 5.00 and 9.00 pm. However, some calls were made in the day-time, at weekends or late at night if these times were most convenient for the interviewees.

The closed questions and the majority of open questions were computer coded and the data were analysed using SPSSX. The remaining open questions were content analysed.

APPENDIX B: PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

		Case Studies n=46 %	Telephone Survey n=508 %
Age	20–29 years	11	6
	30–39	30	40
	40–49	28	32
	50–59	24	21
	60–64	6	2
Sex	Female	74	86
	Male	26	14
Region	Strathclyde	25	29
	Grampian	9	16
	Lothian	15	15
	Tayside	4	8
	Highland	4	7
	Fife	6	7
	Central	4	6
	Dumfries and Galloway	0	3
	Borders	0	1
	Western Isles	0	1
	Outside Scotland	2	6
School Sector	Only primary	50	31
	Only secondary	50	50
	Both primary and secondary	–	19
Main subject of secondary teachers	Science	9	17
	Home Economics	9	15
	English	22	13
	Modern Languages	13	12
	Maths	17	8
	Geography	4	8
	PE	4	6
	Art	4	5
	History	0	3
	Classics	0	2
	RE	4	2
	Business Studies	0	1
	Music	0	1
	Speech and Drama	0	1
	Technical	9	1
	Economics	0	1
	Modern Studies	0	1
	Computing	4	1
	Other	0	3
How long since had permanent post	Never had one	30	10
	1–5 years ago	26	29
	Over 5 years ago	43	61
Current employment	In non-school employment	52	40
	Full-time	(62)	(52)
	Part-time	(38)	(48)
Recent supply/temporary teaching	Yes	33	31
	No	67	69
Supply/temporary teaching in the past 2 years	Yes	43	42
	No	56	58
Currently registered as a supply/temporary teacher	Yes	–	47
	No	–	53

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